



This yellow ribbon symbolizes hope for the safe return of U.S. service members



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Coalition forces back on offensive in Iraq

KATHLEEN T. RHEM
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — U.S. and other coalition forces in Iraq can't defend themselves everywhere all the time, so they've been going on the offensive, a top Defense Department spokesman said Tuesday.

Lawrence Di Rita, special assistant to the secretary of defense, said during a Pentagon press briefing that he thinks it's useful to "zoom out" and discuss some of the "significant gains" that have been made in military operations in Iraq since the end of major combat.

For instance, coalition forces have conducted 2,000 patrols — many jointly with Iraqi police forces — and 30 raids over the past 48 hours, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Norton Schwartz, director of operations for the Joint Staff, who briefed with Di Rita.

These raids have resulted in "241 arrests for various criminal activity, from car theft to murder, and demonstrate that law and order are gradually being restored in Iraq," Schwartz said.

Schwartz described the two major operations coalition forces have undertaken since June 15.

Thirteen raids have been conducted under the auspices of Operation Desert Scorpion, which began June 15 and is ongoing. These

raids have resulted in the capture of 38 detainees and the seizure of \$8 million, millions of Iraqi dinars, and "substantial amounts" of British pounds and euros.

A sub-operation to Desert Scorpion, Operation Sidewinder, ran from June 29 to July 7. In this operation, 4th Infantry Division troops were "tasked to secure Highways 1 and 2 north of Baghdad from Baath attacks against coalition and other civilian traffic," Schwartz said.

The mission led to the capture of 282 detainees and the seizure of 217 rocket-propelled grenades, 200 mortar rounds, 132 small arms and various documents.

The second major operation, Soda Mountain, ran from July 12 to 17. Operation Soda Mountain's goal was to "to increase reconnaissance and presence throughout the whole of Iraq to deter, disrupt and rapidly defeat attacks on coalition forces," Schwartz explained.

This operation brought about 141 raids, which resulted in 611 detainees, including 62 former-regime leaders. Forces also seized 4,297 mortar rounds, 1,346 RPGs, and 635 small arms. A sub-operation, dubbed Ivy Serpent, is ongoing. Ivy Serpent has led to 226 detainees, 800 mortar rounds, 50 small arms and 26 RPGs being taken by coalition

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We're back!



PFC. SAMUEL B. VALLIERE

Sgt. Matthew T. Grebe marches Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, onto the 21 Area Parade Deck July 24, where family members eagerly await their arrival from deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. To read more about recent homecomings, see Page D1.

Unheralded deployments lasted longer than OIF

LANCE CPL. JENN STEIMER
SCOUT STAFF

It wasn't the Christmas present the deployed squadron's Marines were hoping for: Instead of learning they'd be home in mid-January as scheduled, they

found their stay in Okinawa had no end in sight.

"Our men were told on Christmas Eve they were being extended indefinitely," said Capt. Bert W. Carrier, the adjutant for Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367, one of three

See Unheralded, Page A5



CPL. JOSE L. GARCIA

First Lt. Aaron S. Duesing, an AH-1W Super Cobra pilot with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367, reunites with his daughter, Paxton, and wife, Jamie, Friday after returning home from a 13-month deployment to Okinawa.

Aboard the bird



CPL. JOSE L. GARCIA

Sixty students from Mission Meadows Elementary School in Oceanside check out the inside of a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter during a field trip here Friday. The field trip — designed to introduce the children to various Marine Corps occupations — included a demonstration by the air station's Crash, Fire and Rescue Unit and a brief by military police personnel.

Marines huddling to ease combat stress

■ Support group convenes to help them cope with myriad symptoms

PFC. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE
SCOUT STAFF

Some have lost control of their emotions.

"I get pissed at everything," said one Marine.

Others just can't shake gruesome images that haunt them.

"I keep having this dream about when I shot an enemy at very close range — in the face," said another.

Still others are chronically alienated from what's normal and long for the abnormal.

"I felt like I was cheated when I got injured and got sent home. I wanted to go to war and never come back. I want to be a warrior,

that is all I want to do," declared a third.

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Stress: early treatment prescribed

PFC. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE
SCOUT STAFF

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may be unavoidable for nearly one-third of troops who experience combat. But just how long the disorder disrupts their lives generally can be controlled once they return from the war front, mental health professionals say.

"Early intervention can prevent the long-term effects of PTSD. So as long as leadership

remains proactive in their Marines' physical and mental health, the number of affected Marines will be kept to a minimum," said Navy Lt. Lily M. Ly, a staff psychologist at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton's Mental Health Department.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened.

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SGT. MATTHEW J. EPRIGHT
SCOUT STAFF

Underscoring the rationale behind a recent Marine Corps Order aimed at keeping chatty drivers' hands off their cell phones and on their steering wheels, a University of Utah study recently found that cell-phone users are slower to react and more accident-prone

than drivers who don't use them.

"Phone conversations impair driving performance by withdrawing attention from the visual scene, yielding a form of inattention blindness," the study by psychologists David Strayer, Frank Drews and William A. Johnston concluded.

The changes to base driving regulations are outlined in Marine Corps Order 5100.19.

The three biggest changes:

■ a rule requiring the use of a hands-free device for cell phones while driving

■ standardized penalties for not wearing seat belts

■ new rules on when to use vehicle headlights

Military police on base have already begun to enforce the new rules, which were announced in Marine Administrative Message 225/03 dated May 9.

All drivers on Marine Corps installations are now required to use hands-free devices while conversing on a cell phone.

"The changes in the order are out there," said Gunnery Sgt. Wayne R. Jones, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Traffic Accident Investigation Section of the Provost Marshal's Office. "They are some good changes.

"I think the most important one is the cell phone use. We are actually (instituting) it before the state of California mandates it," Jones said, adding that the state Assembly has passed a hands-free stipulation on cell-phone usage. The legislation is now being considered by the state Senate, he said.

According to the order,

See Cell phones, Page A2

Enlisted commissioning shortages loom

PFC. KHANG T. TRAN
SCOUT STAFF

Many Camp Pendleton Marines were so busy waging or supporting the war effort this year, they had too little time to pursue career advancement — leaving too few officer candidates among the enlisted ranks, career specialists here say.

However, there is still time left for Marines to meet fiscal year 2004 deadlines.

No numbers were available to reflect the shortage thus far. Nonetheless, officials underscored the need for enlisted Marines to step forward and apply for programs aimed at helping them advance.

Master Sgt. Andre A. Robinson, the base career planner, said many Marines were too preoccupied with Operation Iraqi Freedom to pursue career advancement. He noted that commissioning programs are a good way to pursue a college education.

Programs offered to eligible enlisted Marines include the Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training program, the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, the Enlisted Commissioning Program and the Meritorious Commissioning Program, Robinson said.

BOOST is a yearlong program offered in Rhode Island, Robinson said. All BOOST applications must be turned in before Oct. 3.

“The BOOST program is basically like a one-year academic boot camp,”

said Robinson. “It’s a great opportunity for young Marines to refresh their memories from what they learned in high school.”

In FY 2003, 76 Marines Corps-wide applied for BOOST and 49 were selected.

Unlike the BOOST program, MECEP automatically sends enlisted Marines directly into a four-year college, said Robinson. The application deadline is Jan. 31.

In FY 2003, 288 Marines Corps-wide applied for MECEP and 80 were selected.

ECP allows enlisted Marines who have already earned a college degree to apply for assignment to Officer Candidates School, according to the Marine

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Power cords, outlets key to electrical safety

SCOUT STAFF

Electricity has come a long way since Benjamin Franklin’s famous kite flight in June of 1752. Today in the twenty-first century, electricity permeates nearly every facet of our lives — from telephones and computers to alarm clocks and washing machines.

Even though electricity is so commonplace in American society, it is important to never lose sight of the inherent risks associated with using electricity.

“Each year incidents involving electrical equipment, such as extension cords, outlets and light bulbs, result in more than 41,000 residential fires that claim about 350 lives and cause over 1,400 injuries,” according to a press release from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

“Many of these electrical-related incidents are preventable,” said Ann Brown, the CP-

SC chairman. “The simple act of removing electrical cords from under rugs could help prevent many house fires.”

When considering household electrical hazards it is important to not only thoroughly examine obvious potential risks, such as electrical outlets, extension cords and space heaters, but also try to identify other not-so-obvious potential risks according to Page Dougherty, the regional director for fire services for the International Code Council.

“It’s the hidden things that cause the most accidents,” said Dougherty.

“When people stack combustible materials in closets close to (a) light bulb, fires can easily start,” said Dougherty.

“Multiple outlet adapters are other things people overlook. They can overdraw the current from an outlet and cause the wires to overheat to cause a fire.”

Extension cords are a good place to start checking for problems. Replace cords that

are worn or frayed and avoid overloading cords. Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis and replaced with a surge protector for long-term wiring.

Keep the areas around outlets and cords free of dust and debris. If an outlet or switch is unusually warm to the touch that is warning sign of unsafe wiring, according to the CPSC. Have a qualified electrician inspect the problem as soon as possible.

Install plastic outlet covers in unused outlets, especially if there are children around. Talk to children about electrical safety and the hazards associated with electrical devices.

Ensure that electrical plugs fit snugly into outlets. Never force a plug into an outlet or remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make it fit into a two-conductor outlet — this can lead to electrical shock, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

Space heaters are a peren-

nial concern — responsible for about 21,800 residential fires a year, according to the CPSC. Space heaters should always be placed on the floor — never in a bathroom or on furniture, since they can be easily tipped over. Space heaters draw lots of power, according to the CPSC, so extreme caution needs to be shown to the outlet and cord. Never hide the cord under a rug — this can easily overheat the space heater and start a fire. Make sure space heaters are never left on in empty rooms or rooms where people are sleeping.

Reviewing these simple safety steps can help prevent household incidents that can lead to serious injuries, death or significant property damage. However, these steps are just a starting point for reducing risks of household electrical incidents. For more information, visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International Web site at www.nesf.org.

Stress

From Page A1

For at least a handful of Marines among those returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom, combat stress manifests itself in different ways. But they’re trying to rally around a common solution — a support/counseling group operated by the Intervention and Treatment Branch, part of the Community Support Services Branch at Marine Corps Community Services. Lt. Cmdr. Elizabeth A. Burns, the chief of counseling services at ITB, leads the group, which is intended to help war veterans cope.

“The therapy helps the Marines and sailors readjust to life in Camp Pendleton,” Burns said.

Combat-stress symptoms range from recurring dreams to outbursts of anger to forgetfulness.

“I keep having the same dream, where I try to beat some punks with a baseball bat, but each time I try to grab a bat, I end up holding a whistle-ball bat, or something that can’t complete the job,” said one group member. Like the others, his name was withheld. Marines participating in the group wear either civilian clothes or shed the

blouses that bear their nametapes to preserve anonymity. In the group, they’re known only by their first names.

“I have nothing against the kids, but in the dream, something makes me really mad about them,” the Marine continued.

“Dreams have a lot of interpretations,” Burns said. “The plastic bat may represent powerlessness. The punk kids may represent wrong or evil he feels powerless against.”

All five members of the group, ranging in rank from E-2 to E-5, were either squad leaders or fire team leaders with infantry companies that were involved in combat.

The group, now in its third week, is part of a “very structured” eight-week program that deals with acute stress, said Burns.

The ITB offers both group and individual counseling. In either setting, warfighters are taught to counteract abnormal impulses or behaviors. The instruction includes techniques to relieve stress, control anxiety and defuse anger. For example, members are taught to breathe with their diaphragms — which helps relieve stress, said Burns.

Just talking through your problems — or listening to others talk through theirs — is one benefit of group counseling.

“I like the group counseling because I might hear something I hadn’t thought of,”

said one group member.

Burns speculated there are probably some Marines and sailors who are having difficulty adjusting but are reluctant to come in for counseling. Naval Hospital’s Mental Health Department regularly screens returning service members for combat stress but had no numbers on how many are undergoing treatment.

The National Institute of Mental Health says approximately 30 percent of troops who spend time in a war zone will develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder — a diagnosis that applies after combat-induced stress symptoms linger for more than a month, according to Navy Lt. Lily M. Ly, a staff psychologist at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton’s Mental Health Department.

The Combat Stress Group meets Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at Building 1122. It is open to all Marines and sailors who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For spouses of returning Marines who may be experiencing combat stress, ITB offers a program designed to help them recognize combat stress and avoid aggravating it. The group meets Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

The ITB’s walk-in hours are from 1 to 3 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

For more information, call 725-9051.

Cell phones

From Page A1

hands-free devices allow a driver to talk on a cell phone without holding it to their ear, thereby enabling them to keep their hands on the wheel.

On base, the use of a cell phone without a hands-free device will result in a traffic ticket that will levy two points against the motorists’ base driving privilege.

While the requirement to wear seat belts on Camp Pendleton is nothing new, the changes standardize punishments for noncompliance.

According to the order, a first offense is punishable by an automatic one-week suspension of base driving privileges, as well as mandatory attendance at a Saturday, four-hour remedial

driving class focused on using seat belts.

A second violation results in a one-month suspension of base driving privileges. And a third offense nets a six-month suspension.

The order also mandates that headlights be turned on during light and heavy rain, instances of fog or smoke, and any other reduced-visibility situations.

The changes are effective immediately, though enforcement will be light while PMO gets the word out, officials said. PMO will post signs at all the gates and at several other points on base. The signs will serve as reminders to drivers about the new regulations.

For more information on the University of Utah study visit www.utah.edu/unews/releases/03/jan/cellphone.html.

Energy-saving tip of the week



Set the fan speed of your central air conditioner on high except in very humid weather. When it’s humid, set the speed on low; you will feel less air flow, but more moisture will be removed from the air, which will make it cooler.

Pendleton Points

Submissions for Pendleton Points must be received by Monday at 4 p.m. to make that week’s paper. Submissions can be brought to Building 1160, Room 113; faxed to 385-0053; or e-mailed to scout@pendleton.usmc.mil.

Some entitlements won’t be on Aug. 1 paychecks

Due to a payroll system failure, some Marines will not receive all recently updated pay-related entitlements on their Aug. 1 paychecks. The error will not affect base pay, but various other transactions could be affected, according to Marine Administrative Message 347/03.

Pay-related diary entries that failed to load as a result of the malfunction will be reflected on Aug. 15 checks.

Mandatory motorcycle stand down to be held

A mandatory motorcycle safety stand down for all base motorcyclists will be Aug. 5 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. and again Aug. 7 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. and from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The stand down will cover Department of Defense instructions, Marine Corps orders, training prerequisites, proper protective equipment, inspection procedures and rehabilitation relating to motorcycle accidents.

The event will be held at the Base Training Center/Theater. It is mandatory for all on base motorcyclists — both military and civilian. No equipment is necessary.

For more information, call Philip Bowers at 763-2367.

Safety card grace period ends for base motorcyclists

The grace period for motorcycle safety cards has ended. No rider — military member or otherwise — will be permitted onboard the base without proper documentation of Motorcycle Safety Course completion. The safety card must be in the rider’s possession at all times when operating a motorcycle on base.

Military Police will be conducting random entry/exit inspections to enforce these regulations. Riders will be issued citations for any infractions of the base order, DoD instructions and/or California vehicle codes. If warranted, motorcycles will be impounded. For more information, call Gunnery Sgt. Wayne R. Jones at the Traffic Accident and Investigation Section at 725-5927.

Civilian leadership luncheon set

The next Civilian Leadership Development luncheon is scheduled for Aug. 12 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the South Mesa Club. The guest speaker, Marie Henseler of Future’s Quest, will discuss how to be “Wildly Successful on Your Own Terms.”

CLD luncheons are open to the public. The cost is \$8.30 and includes full buffet, tea and coffee. For reservations, call Virginia Grizzle at 725-1853 or e-mail her at grizzleV@pendleton.usmc.mil by Wednesday.

Auditions to sing national anthem for Chargers

The San Diego Chargers are giving a Marine or sailor from Southern California the opportunity to sing the National Anthem for the Aug. 29 game versus the San Francisco 49ers. Camp Pendleton has been asked to submit a videotape of applicants and will be holding auditions on Tuesday at the 1st Marine Division Band, Building 1363 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

To qualify to sing, you must be on active-duty (officers and enlisted are welcome), provide a written command endorse-

ment to participate and be available to audition Tuesday. Marines will be taped in civilian clothes to allow for impartiality. Interested Marines and sailors must sign up for an audition time by calling the the Community Relations office at 725-5727 or 763-0289 or e-mail or Hernandezpy@pendleton.usmc.mil.

Quarterly education officer’s brief scheduled

The quarterly education officer’s brief is scheduled for Monday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Building 1331, Room 210. This brief is mandatory for all newly appointed education officers but all education officers are welcome. Guest speakers will include a representative from Veteran’s Affairs, local colleges and other education personnel. To reserve a seat, call 725-6660.

Hazardous waste training ongoing here

General environmental and hazardous material/waste unit training is available upon request to work sections aboard the base, along with regularly scheduled classes to educate base military and civilian personnel on such matters, in accordance with a Marine Corps Order.

The instruction, through the assistant chief of staff for Environmental Security Training Branch, is offered monthly.

For a training schedule, call Environmental Security, 725-9775, or visit www.envsec.cpp.usmc.mil.

Base water mains to be flushed

Pendleton’s Facilities Maintenance Department continues the quarterly flushing of water mains base-wide.

Flushing is required to remove the sediment that has built up to an unacceptable level. While this sediment is not harmful, it discolors the water.

The best method of removing this sediment from the mains is by flushing large volumes of water through the lines. The water supply will be rust-colored during flushing. The flushing will conclude each day at 4 p.m.

Stuart Mesa Housing and the North County Transit District’s wash down area will be flushed today. Also, all of 22 Area will be flushed Friday through Wednesday.

Washing of laundry should be curtailed during your area’s scheduled flushing cycle. Residents should make sure the water in their quarters or barracks is clear before washing their first load of laundry. If the water is clear, you may wash from 6 p.m. until 7 a.m. the next morning on days flushing is scheduled in your area.

For more information, call Terry Cummins at 725-0602.

VITA and JLAO offering services for returning service members

The Joint Legal Assistance Office and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance center anticipate legal assistance and tax-related issues for deployed service members and their families upon return. Both offices have established the following hours:

The JLAO is located in Building 13131 and is open from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

Walk-in services are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30-10 a.m.

For more information, call 725-6172/5788.

The VITA Office will be open through September in Building 1687 Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Fridays from 8-11 a.m.

For more information, call 763-2518.

Change of Command



Lt. Col. Robert E. Davis



Lt. Col. Gerald L. Smith

Lt. Col. Robert E. Davis is assuming command of 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment from Lt. Col. Gerald L. Smith today at 10 a.m. at the 41 Area Parade Field. Davis most recently served as the Operations Officer for 11th Marines. Smith will be assuming duties as a warfighting instructor at Command and Staff College at Quantico, Va.

Post and Relief



Sgt. Maj. David L. Bullock



Sgt. Maj. Hubert O. Caloud

Sgt. Maj. David L. Bullock will post as the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) sergeant major at 2:30 p.m. today at the 21 Area Parade Deck. Bullock most recently served as the sergeant major of the Marine Corps Detachment, Fort Leonardwood, Mo. Sgt. Maj. Hubert O. Caloud, the departing sergeant major, is retiring from active duty.

PTSD

From Page A1

The NIMH says 5.2 million adults in the United States are treated for PTSD yearly. The NIMH also reports that roughly 30 percent of personnel who spend time in a war zone develop PTSD.

It's the same kind of disorder that can affect those outside a war zone who've been exposed to violence or other trauma — a car accident, for example.

When combat-oriented or other trauma-induced stress holds a grip on family life and work for more than a month, it's dubbed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Ly said.

Symptoms of PTSD include emotional numbness, sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, irritability, outbursts of anger and feelings of intense guilt, according to the NIMH Web site.

According to Lt. Cmdr. Elizabeth A. Burns, the chief of counseling services at the Intervention and Treatment Branch, part of the Community Support Services Branch at Marine Corps Community Services, service members often don't understand their anxiety

is normal, in light of the tribulations of warfare.

For many who've served in combat, graphic or violent images become normal — and can even amount to a fixation.

“After witnessing and being involved in combat, the body normalizes those images, desensitizing them,” Ly said.

Ly said PTSD is a “perfectly normal” reaction for service members involved in combat.

Mental health professionals encourage Marines to talk about their experiences and feelings among themselves, chaplains, leaders and medical professionals, said Petty Officer 1st Class Carlos F. Enriquez, leading petty officer at the hospital's Mental Health Department.

Enriquez said verbalizing thoughts and feelings helps relieve stress by releasing energy.

Ly stressed that early detection and treatment is key to avoiding long-term problems — a point echoed by Enriquez.

“As long as Marines continue to take care of Marines, PTSD will not have an effect on the Marine Corps,” said Enriquez.

Research has shown that therapy and medication help the patient work through the trauma, according to the NIMH Web Site.

Unheralded

From Page A1

unsung Camp Pendleton-based units whose regularly scheduled deployments were extended by five months or more.

HMLA-367, along with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment and B Company, 3rd Assault Amphibian Bn., all left Camp Pendleton in July 2002, expecting a six-month deployment to Okinawa.

Until Operation Iraqi Freedom intervened — sending other Pendleton-based units into the fray while these three faced double duty in the Pacific.

“For a lot of us, the morale went down. We were upset about the extension and only told it would be three more months to a year,” said Cpl. Adam A. Couch, an intelligence analyst with 2/4, which returned home June 19, followed by HMLA-367, which was welcomed home by family and friends on Friday — more than a year after leaving Camp Pendleton as part of the Unit Deployment Program.

B Co., 3rd AABn. remains overseas and is slated to return in September. Months ago, the unit was already preparing to return home when its replacement, C Co., received orders for war — thereby extending B Co.'s deployment.

Similarly, “(HMLA-367's) return was delayed because the squadron relieving us was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” Carrier said.

Although some friends and families of the Marines were glad their loved ones were out of harms way, members of the deployed units weren't so upbeat.

“We knew we had an important job, but we still felt left out,” Carrier said.

“It was like being on a team and training for a sport, then never having the chance to play a game,” Couch said.

“We trained with units who were fighting and we weren't. The people who were supposed to relieve us were fighting and we weren't,” he said. “They were out there doing the real thing, the reason why we train; they got the ribbons and the honor, while for us it felt very ungratifying. We were the forgotten ones.”

The units trained in various countries while deployed, including the Philippines, mainland Japan, South Korea, Guam, Australia and East Timor.

Recently, their spirits lifted when they received word they'd be heading home. “You could feel the energy,” Couch said.

“The morale in the battalion went up, even though they kept changing the dates on us. We still knew we were going home,” he added.

“I wish we had received a hard and fast date and not been told dates that weren't followed through,” Carrier said.

But on July 22, they received word they'd be home on Friday, Carrier said.

This time, they made it — but some felt upstaged by those who saw the combat action they longed for.

“It was nice to be welcomed home,” Carrier said. “When we were coming in, we saw all the posters and banners for the OIF Marines. That was nice, but it still made us feel left out.”

But Carrier's joy at seeing his wife overshadowed his disappointment at being unheralded.

“It was great to see my wife again after being away for a year,” said Carrier, who deployed one month after getting married.

Commission

From Page A2

Corps Recruiting Command Web site at www.mcrc.usmc.mil.

In FY 2003, 29 Marines Corps-wide applied for ECP and 19 were selected.

MCP requires an associate's degree or at least two years of college and a command recommendation.

In FY 2003, 11 Marines applied for MCP and 9 were selected.

Deadline boards for the next available ECP and MCP classes convene Oct. 1 and Dec. 1.

The following are general requirements for Marine Corps commissioning programs:

- United States citizen.
- Lance corporal or higher for the BOOST program, corporal or higher for all others.
- High school diploma or GED.

Age requirements vary for the different commissioning programs.

Interested Marines should contact their command's adjutant, career planner or visit www.usmc.mil.

Coalition

From Page A1

forces in a series of 27 separate raids.

“These major operations, as well as the daily patrols and training and assistance that our forces perform each and every day, are slowly but deliberately building a more stable and secure Iraq,” Schwartz said.

He also noted that coalition forces are working closely on many fronts with Iraqis to increase security. The general described several areas of Iraqi cooperation.

Four thousand Iraqi militiamen will be trained by American forces “in the next several weeks and will work under U.S. command in regions around the country as part of the civil defense force.”

Twelve thousand Iraqis will be trained this year for the new Iraqi army, growing to 40,000 in two years.

American soldiers are training and equipping Iraqi police forces at several locations around the country.

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division are training an Iraqi facility protection force to provide security at power plants, water-treatment plants and other public works facilities.

In related news, since the demise of Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay, American military forces in Iraq have seen a lessening in the number of attacks but an increase in the level of sophistication of these attacks, Schwartz said.

Attacks on Americans have gone “from what began largely as small-arms attacks to attacks with use of rocket-propelled grenades and now the use of improvised explosive devices,” he explained. “That reflects a level of sophistication (that) has matured over time.”

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